

# **2012 Human Services Budget Community Conversations**

**Table 1 with Councilmember Godden - Summary of Responses  
*Tuesday, May 31, 2011, Van Asselt Community Center***

## **SUMMARY:**

- **Willing to pay more for basic services**
- **Human services is an integrated system**
- **Everything is critically important; you can't take a link out of the chain**
- **Transportation is also critically important**
- **End poverty**

## **1. In light of reduced funding at the Federal and State levels and increasing pressures on the City's General Fund, how do you think the City should prioritize Human Services Department in the overall budget?**

- Critical – human services is feeling the brunt, since the services are “double cut”
- Social justice goals – the city is the top priority
- Now is the time we need to help the people who need services most
- We need to fund survival services: shelter, showers, supportive housing
- All services are critical
- If we hold the line, we take a step backward, because of the previous reductions in services
- Basic human survival: shelter, food, housing
- We need to lessen the impact of the economy
- If we don't hold the line, we will have larger problems, like substance abuse
- It is difficult to survive and grow the community, we can't cut services
- It's hard to turn someone away when there is nowhere else to go
- Prepared meal services are up 20% in the last calendar year—have been on the rise since 2008
- Programs continue to shut down, so we're serving more people
- The biggest issue is the reduction in the FPAP
- Human services are paramount and help to make Seattle livable. People need better.
- We need to increase revenue, not just make cuts
- Private fundraising + Council help = success
- Fundraising is down, taking the toll on the organizations
- Society is judged by how they treat their poor
- There is not enough shelter space or transitional housing. The waits are too long for transitional housing and cuts will exacerbate the problem
- People that are hurt the most are women and those that are experiencing homelessness for the first time

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### **2. What do you think are the Human Services Department's core functions and what programs do you consider most important?**

- Domestic violence, homelessness, employment programs
- Food and shelter programs
- Survival services: food, shelter (day & night), domestic violence, troubled youth
- Look at as a system – each part is necessary and we can't take away shelter or food or anything
- Each is equally important, lend themselves to one another
- All are critically important
- We can't deny the needs that need to be met
- Need to service all of needs—a full circle
- Issues are as complex as the individual
- There is never a clean-cut case of domestic violence, there are many factors and all resources must be provided
- Everything is necessary
- The system is integrated—if it frays, it will negatively impact those it serves and Seattle as a community
- Tough times force the City to look at outcomes and programs
- We need a tiered system, with illustrations about what cuts really look like
- Early child education is critical for development and for the ability for parents to work

### **3. What can the City do that would reduce the need for human services?**

- Permanent support of long term housing
- It's not an either/or—it's an "and" provide survival services
- Access
- Open up the Section 8 waitlist
- More money for transitional housing. Current system: In shelter for 90 days, creates few options: homelessness, new shelter, back to abuser
- Transitional housing and services
- Would remove the biggest barrier & provide for their families and focus on self sufficiency

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- Create a more sustainable community: education vouchers, more preventative v reactive actions, address the root issues, bring services together, increase wages, decrease housing costs
- End poverty
- Livable wages: \$23/hr for a family of 2 or 3
- Affordable housing is less than 1/3 of your monthly income
- Go around in a circle, never quite enough to live or to be eligible for services
- Look at education, intergenerational poverty issues
- Paid sick leave is a start
- Look at areas that limit stressors
- Shelter for everyone
- Helping poor families through school counselors, there are lots of options out there
- Thoughtfully get rid of institutional racism—that plays a large role
- We're in a selfish age—must be wanting to help others be more comfortable until we get there, we're going to keep on
- Getting community more involved; it's a collaborative effort
- Get the message out: there is a huge issue that impacts everyone
- Build leadership from the ground up through community organizing:
- Working together toward a common goal
- Less fear, more generosity
- Work together with the state
- Funding for the organizing

**4. How could departments outside of the Human Services Department do their work differently to meet their missions in ways that would *also* help Seattle residents meet their basic human needs? For instance: Parks, Public Safety, and Neighborhoods?**

- Parks levies—there is an opportunity to create/ expand upon daycare/shelter/nutrition.
- Community centers are underutilized currently
- I wish transportation dollars could be focused in different areas
- Lower costs for the community
- Explore creating food banks as ways to leverage money
- Utilize community centers for community organizing, also through law enforcement (people who are trustworthy, not to be scared of)
- Parks and community centers are good for after school programs
- Boys & Girls Club – after school programs are good; could we do that with community centers?

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- There needs to be more domestic violence education with SPD
- SPD needs to file DV reports right away, document them with photos. (This makes it easier and faster to obtain protection orders)
- The City ought to review its properties and dedicate city resources—make shelter space visible (So people can see what's going on and see the need.)
- Libraries/parks/community centers/teen programming—great resources, daycare
- SPD comes in contact with a lot of people in “difficult moments” in their lives, you should build in human services to SPD response
- SPD needs more education in DV and racism
- Ask organizations what they could do to provide services
- Investigate 24/7 schools—adult learning, classes/kid students
- Leadership of the Mayor/Exec—demonstrates that they're watching their budgets
- Inspire citizens to walk their talk and give up perks for services
- Constructive, not punitive (SPD drug court, etc)

### **5. Would you be willing to pay more in taxes to avoid a reduction in services for the Human Services Department?**

- Yes, but revenue needs to be generated somewhere to meet basic needs
- At the end of the day, it's the people's needs
- Kudos to the Council for listening and having this kind of forum
- Decide what the goal is—a dedicated human service fund?
- We value human services and public safety as priorities